

STATE ACTION FOR EDUCATION LEADERSHIP PROJECT

**P-16 Council
Agenda Item E-2
March 5, 2002**

Information

The Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds and the National Consortium awarded Kentucky a two-year, \$250,000 grant for the State Action for Education Leadership Project. (Last June, Kentucky received a \$50,000 planning grant for the same project.) The National Consortium comprises several national organizations: the National Association of State Boards of Education, the Council of Chief State School Officers, the Education Commission of the States, the National Conference of State Legislatures, and the National Governors' Association, plus Wallace-Reader's Digest.

The purpose of the grant is to develop and implement state policy that supports effective school and district leadership. Kentucky's leadership project will address flexibility in licensing and preparation of administrators, incentives for recruitment of principals and superintendents, professional development, and ways to improve communication among administrators. Universities and agency partners will develop local demonstration sites to model effective instructional leadership.

Grant partners include the Kentucky Department of Education, the Governor's Office, the Kentucky Board of Education, the Education Professional Standards Board, the Council on Postsecondary Education, the legislature, and other partners.

Attached is a press release regarding this award.

KENTUCKY RECEIVES WALLACE FUNDS' GRANT FOR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) -- Kentucky will join 14 other states in a national project to improve student learning by strengthening the abilities of superintendents and principals, the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds announced today.

Kentucky will receive a three-year implementation grant of \$250,000 as part of the State Action for Education Leadership Project (SAELP). SAELP is the centerpiece of the Wallace Funds' LEADERS Count initiative, a five-year, \$150 million commitment to place high-quality leadership at the core of school reform and to build a new field of knowledge that helps improvements spread on a broader scale.

"Because of Kentucky's strong emphasis on accountability and student performance, we will focus on identifying leadership qualities that maximize teacher performance and student learning," said Gene Wilhoit, Commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Education. "This grant will provide a wonderful opportunity to continue the discussions and plans we've begun with individuals and groups interested in the issue of leadership and how it contributes to the success of our students."

As a SAELP state, Kentucky will work closely with selected school districts, representatives of local school boards, school councils, school administrators, teachers, minority educators, university representatives, parents and business and civic groups to determine changes in policies and practices that could be implemented across other areas of the state to improve instructional leadership. Issues may include additional flexibility in licensing and preparation of administrators; incentives for recruitment and fellowships; and methods to improve the dynamics between administrators, boards of education and school councils to boost student performance.

"For too long, education leadership has been a missing link in achieving academic excellence for all children," said M. Christine DeVita, president of the Wallace Funds. "To make

the needed changes in the recruitment, preparation and retention of superior leaders, reform has to address both district practices and state regulations and policies. This new state-district initiative is intended to discover and adopt new ways of strengthening leadership, and to have those changes improve the prospects of children in states and districts across the country.”

SAELP, the Wallace Funds’ state-level initiative, was launched in spring 2001 with \$8.9 million in funding. The project is being led by a national consortium consisting of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), the National Governors’ Association, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the National Association of State Boards of Education, and the Education Commission of the States.

Kentucky was one of 37 states that responded to the consortium’s invitation to submit reform proposals. In June, following a review by an independent panel, Kentucky was among 15 states to receive \$50,000 planning grants. In December, the consortium decided to award implementation grants to all 15 states following a further in-depth, independent review of the states’ plans.

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